

WORKER EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAM

The NIEHS currently funds training and education in the following six areas:

Hazardous Waste Worker Training Program:

Trains hazardous waste workers and emergency responders in every region of the country to save lives, contain hazardous materials incidents, and protect themselves and others from harm when hazardous materials incidents occur.

Brownfields Minority Worker Training Program:

Connects local Brownfield residents with valuable job training. Provides local community-based organizations and developers with a highly trained workforce.

Minority Worker Training Program:

Prepares inner city youth for employment in environmental restoration and hazardous materials.

Nuclear Worker Training Program:

Trains workers engaged in environmental restoration, waste treatment, and emergency response at sites in the Department of Energy's nuclear weapons complex.

Advanced Training Technology Progress:

Improves the health and safety of workers by developing computer-based training products and multimedia tools such as interactive DVD modules, virtual reality simulations and interactive TV and videoconferencing.

Hazmat Disaster Preparedness Training Program

Prepares a cadre of experienced workers for prevention and response to future terrorist incidents in a wide variety of facilities and high-risk operations.

CONNECTED, COORDINATED, AND EFFECTIVE

The NIEHS Worker Education and Training Program (WETP) funds an extensive, national network of non-profit organizations, universities, and labor unions that are committed to protecting workers and their communities by delivering high-quality safety and health training to hazardous waste workers and emergency responders. WETP has trained over a million workers to safely and effectively respond to this nation's hazardous materials incidents and hazardous waste operations. In the last two years, WETP has been on the forefront of training specialized worker populations—like firefighters, emergency room workers, heavy equipment operators, transportation workers, and construction laborers—to respond to terrorist acts. Today, WETP represents one of the largest pools of workers trained to handle hazardous waste, and a viable mechanism for providing training to workers who respond to terrorist acts.

Congress initiated WETP in 1986 under the Superfund Amendment and Reauthorization Act (SARA). WETP has formed training partnerships in all 50 states through a network of community colleges, government agencies, community-based organizations, academic institutions, labor unions, and labor-management groups. WETP training has been provided through cooperative agreements with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT).

NIEHS WORKER EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAM



PROGRAM SUMMARY

Training for
**Emergency Response to
Hazardous Materials Incidents,
Terrorist Acts, and the
Cleanup of Hazardous
Waste Sites**



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**National Institute of Environmental
Health Sciences, NIH, DHHS**

PLANNING, PROTECTING & RESPONDING

Since its inception, WETP has successfully supported over ninety different institutions that have trained over one million workers across the country and presented nearly 56,000 classroom and hands-on trainings. It offers training and education to workers engaged in hazardous materials transportation, hazardous waste cleanup, brownfields restoration, and emergency response. Although offering a broad array of courses, the OSHA Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response training (1910.120) is at the core of the WETP program.

A Win-Win Proposition.

Providing Critical Skills to Homeland Security.

WETP Awardees:

- Train disaster site workers to respond safely to natural and man-made disasters through a course developed jointly with OSHA;
- Train workers engaged in the vast and unprecedented cleanup of the Department of Energy's nuclear weapons complex; and
- Train "first receivers" at hospitals to handle biological and chemical terrorism victims.

Improving Lives and Communities.

WETP Awardees:

- Prepare inner city youth for employment in environmental restoration and hazardous materials through life skills training and specialized remediation training.
- Offer community residents the tools to change their lives and their communities through job training and safety and health education in environmental remediation techniques and general construction.

PROVEN AND EFFECTIVE CURRICULUM

WETP has led the way in developing innovative curricula based on the concept of "worker trainers" and hands-on, site-specific training. These results have consistently been achieved at a cost that is lower than the most commercially available hazardous materials training programs. In addition, the cornerstones of WETP training— realistic demonstrations, adult learning principles, and the use of peer trainers— assures quality that is critical when workers are putting their lives on the line.

Peer Trainers:

- Have high credibility with the majority of workers;
- Build leadership skills and help to create safety watchdogs in the workplace; and
- Provide first-hand work and shop experience.

WETP training programs:

- Provide meaningful scenarios, case studies, and lessons learned from actual events;
- Emphasize small group activities;
- Use innovative techniques like risk mapping (developing a visual guide of hazards at work); and
- Include advanced training technologies including computer and internet-based learning.



PART OF THE NATIONAL RESPONSE PLAN

Learning from Ground Zero

WETP has been a national leader in the effort to train workers to respond safely to terrorist incidents and natural disasters. WETP awardees developed the official safety and health training for site workers at the cleanup of the World Trade Center. Master instructors from awardee organizations delivered that training to the thousands of workers who toiled at Ground Zero. Technical experts from WETP's Clearinghouse wrote the first report about the safety and health issues at the site. Awardees also developed the first course to train remediation workers to safely clean up the anthrax contamination created by the mailing of spore-laden letters.

Partnering on the Disaster Site Worker Courses with OSHA

WETP master instructors from academia and labor unions covering construction trades, fire fighting, and transportation worked with training experts from the OSHA Training Institute to develop the Disaster Site Worker course, a 16-hour course for workers, like heavy equipment operators, whose expertise may be needed during a disaster. The course teaches workers how to work safely, wear respirators, and function within the Incident Management System. OSHA Resource Centers and WETP awardees are now offering this course (OTI 7600) and the companion train-the-trainer course (OTI 5600) across the country.

Responding To Disasters Through the NRP

WETP has developed an Emergency Support Activation Plan that is integrated into OSHA's Health and Safety Annex to the NRP. To respond effectively, WETP has surveyed all eighteen awardees and catalogued the resources available, particularly master instructors, subject matter experts, training facilities, and sampling equipment. Now, when the NRP is activated, WETP can support the response fully.